

Who's Who In A&R At Malaco—Chimneyville

INTRODUCTION:

Malaco was founded in 1966 by Tommy Couch and Mitch Malouf. The initial operation was a "mini conglomerate" of several different businesses with an overall goal of paying the rent. Concert promotions, bookings, and independent record productions made up the general scope of business. In 1967, a four track studio was opened and several staff writers and musicians were added. Paul Davis and George Soule were two of the first staff members. Later Tommy Tate and Jerry Puckett were added.

In addition to recording Paul Davis in a southern pop vein, the company signed Mississippi Fred McDowell and recorded a classic blues album, "I Do Not Play No Rock & Roll." During the early 1970's a close association was formed with a New Orleans producer/arranger named Wardell Quezzerque. The first joint production with Quezzerque was on a group called the Unemployed that was leased to Jerry Wexler at Atlantic. With the success of this initial project, they elected to continue and in a one week session two singles each were completed on both Jean Knight and King Floyd. With these masters recorded in their own 8 track studio, the tapes were then taken to STAX and a number of other record companies. Everyone turned them down. At this point, Tom and his associates started Chimneyville Records and released the King Floyd record "Groove Me." As soon as it was released, it broke in New Orleans and a distribution deal was soon established with Atlantic. The record eventually sold two and a half million copies. "Mr. Big Stuff" by Jean Knight was picked up by STAX and sold over two million copies.

Early in 1973, an association was formed with Henry Stone and TK Productions that is still in effect today. TK Productions distributes both Chimneyville Records and Malaco Records in the United States. Through that affiliation came the international success of Dorothy Moore's "Misty Blue" which sold over two million copies.

The Malaco staff is composed of Tommy Couch, President; Wolf Stephenson, Vice President; Joe Lewis is Director of National Promotions, aided by Frank Williams in the Gospel Promotions division. Stewart Madison heads the International Operation for Malaco as well as domestic sales, and James Griffin manages the two 24 track studios.

All of Malaco's product is placed internationally on an independent, country by country basis. There is no exclusive overall agreement in any one country and current masters and/or sub-publishing projects worldwide include specific agreements with various companies in U.K., Brazil and Canada to name only a few.

The Malaco studios are being used by many producers and at the present time several chart records recorded at Malaco are doing quite well. Some of these records include Anita Ward's "Ring My Bell" on Juana Records produced by Frederick Knight; Nigel Olsson's "A Little Bit of Soap" produced by Paul Davis on Bang Records; James Bradley's "I'm In Too Deep" produced by Frederick Knight currently on the R&B charts on Malaco Records; The Legendary Gentlemen Album by the Jackson Southernaires is currently in the #1 or 2 position on the national Gospel charts and is on the Malaco label; and a soon to be released single on Peggy Scott's "You've Got It All" on RCA records.

Malaco also distributes the Muscle Shoals Sound Record label thru TK Productions. The Dealers new single "Love Maker" produced by Roger Hawkins will be released shortly. Another artist produced by Jimmy Johnson and Roger Hawkins is George Jackson. It is interesting to note that although most of the Malaco-Chimneyville Records are distributed through TK in the U.S., this does not include the Malaco Gospel line. Furthermore, Wolf Stevenson hinted at the formation of a new Country-Rock label tentatively called Southern Biscuit Records. This label will probably also not come under the TK distribution agreement. Acts tentatively scheduled for that label include Will Beeley, George Ates, and Ben Marney.

Upcoming releases from Malaco are albums by James Bradley, Dorothy Moore, Natural High, and The Original Soul Stirrers featuring J.J. Farley.

Current releases are an album and single by the group Freedom, a single by James Bradley, and a single by Jewel Bass.

MALACO — CHIMNEYVILLE A&R

TOM COUCH: President



Tom was born and raised in Tusculumbia, Alabama which was close enough to Muscle Shoals that he developed a keen appreciation for musical talent. In his own words, "Before I knew it I was promoting bands around that area."

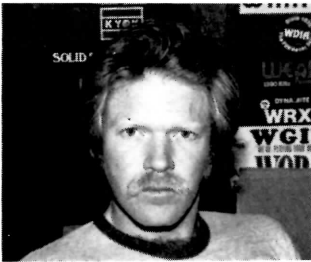
In the early '60's, Tom enrolled at Ole Miss to study pharmacy but continued promoting bands with the establishment of Campus Attractions there. After graduation, Tom moved to Jackson and formed Malaco in conjunction with Mitch Malouf. In 1969, Malaco's first release was "The Ballad of Archie Who?," recorded just after the Tennessee-Ole Miss football game and sold some 30,000 copies at \$1.00 each. In Tom's words, "So we decided to sit back and take a longer look at this business."

The label has grown considerably since those early days. In the area of A&R, Tom points out that everyone gets involved, although most projects usually come through him.

It's worth noting that all of Malaco's hits have been with relative unknowns. Some of them, like "Hollywood & Vine" were partially completed or completed masters while others like Dorothy Moore, were produced completely by Malaco. And the label continues to grow. In Tom's words, "We get so much each week we can't afford the postage to return it all . . . but we do try to listen to everything."

MALACO — CHIMNEYVILLE A&R

WOLF STEPHENSON: Vice President



Wolf grew up in Columbia, Mississippi and first met Tom in college working on Campus Attractions. After graduation, by chance, Wolf ended up living in Jackson and renewed his relationship with Tom. They opened a teen club for a few years while booking local bands (and even working as pharmacists) to keep Malaco and their four track studio alive. In early 1970, with the help of some investors, their studio was upgraded to eight tracks and Wolf began to spend more time in the studio. At this point, they closed the teen club and opened a larger more adult club. Then as the records began to sell, the second club was sold as the studio was upgraded further and Wolf gradually became a full time engineer and producer.

JAMES GRIFFIN: Studio Supervisor



James who was originally from Fayetteville, Arkansas, was working for Stan's Record Distributors in Shreveport when Wolf found that the studio had grown to such an extent that it required another person. Through mutual friends, James was recommended and, in 1977, he left Stan's to learn how to become a recording engineer at Malaco. Wolf points out that "he picked up everything unbelievably fast, and the fact that he was also a musician has proved very valuable in the studio."

Today, James is actively involved in supervising the two 24 track studios at Malaco.

STEWART MADISON: Director of Business Administration



In 1968, Stewart invested in a studio in Shreveport, Louisiana called Sound City Recording and became president of the studio by 1970. While running the studio, Stewart established Alarm Records in 1972 under a distribution agreement with TK and enjoyed some R&B chart success with Ted Taylor in 1976.

In August, 1978, Stewart sold the studio and moved over to join Malaco where he is now involved with various business and administrative functions.

JOE LEWIS: National Promotion Director



Joe started in radio in 1947. He then entered college in Chicago while working part time for Vee Jay Records and local radio. After graduation, following a brief stint in teaching, Joe was back in radio in Jackson by 1962. He then joined the John McLendon Radio Chain and in one year worked Little Rock, Birmingham, Tampa, and Shreveport. After this hectic pace, he was back in Jackson to stay by 1964. Joe then spent the next fifteen years at WOKJ while helping to develop Malaco on a part time basis until 1975 when Lewis moved over to Malaco on a full time basis.

GLORIA MILLWOOD, Secretary and Bookkeeper

DIANE BROWN, Secretary and Receptionist

MALACO — CHIMNEYVILLE ROSTER

MALACA (TK DIST.)

Jewel Bass
James Bradley
Freedom
Dorothy Moore

MALACO (GOSPEL)

Gerald Sisters
Jackson Southernairs
Original Soul Stirrers
(Featuring J.J. Farley)
Williams Family

CHIMNEYVILLE (TK DIST.)

Fern Kinney
McKinley Mitchell
Natural High